



APRIL



BEING PHYSICALLY FIT

Want to do something that will help every other aspect of a healthy lifestyle? Get yourself physically fit. There is no substitute! Physical exercise provides health benefits that cannot be obtained in any other way. It is central to almost all other aspects of a healthy lifestyle. And you really don't need to suffer to do the sorts of activities that will improve your health. The greatest benefit to health is obtained by changing from a "sedentary" lifestyle (more or less a "couch potato") to doing 30 minutes of activity a day, such as walking, bicycling, climbing steps, or working in the garden. AND . . . you don't have to do it all at once!

- Want to lose some weight? Exercise is one of the most important aspects of maintaining weight.
- Need to stop smoking? Exercise makes it a lot easier, and increases the chances of success.
- Are your blood pressure, cholesterol, or glucose levels elevated? Exercise helps control every one of these processes, perhaps to the point that medications can be decreased or eliminated (under your physician's supervision).
- Even if you don't have any of these health problems, exercise clearly will help your health. The simple act of regular exercise can be shown to prolong your life.
- Let's not forget about feeling good! Just about all of us have been on an exercise program at one time or another, and can attest that our bodies feel better, and we feel better about ourselves.
- And while we tend to concentrate on heart problems, exercise helps with so many other health issues: *Arthritis, osteoporosis, breast cancer, colon cancer. . .*

Just as achieving a healthy weight doesn't mean you need to look like a model, achieving a healthy level of physical fitness is not a matter of doing all of the things you see athletes doing on TV or in fitness magazines. You don't need to be an "athlete" to have a healthy level of activity. And it's not just for the young — exercise benefits the elderly more than their younger counterparts. The program just needs to be tailored to the appropriate fitness levels. You don't need expensive equipment, you don't need a personal trainer or to join a health club. You simply need to **do 20-30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week**. This may be as simple as walking at a brisk pace.

Go out and start making a healthier and more enjoyable life . . . and exercise for health!

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, www.nhlbi.org



The vision of the Whitehall Cardiovascular Disease Task Force is to improve the heart health of all Whitehall residents.